into a truce, or declare war; or a soldier, about to buckle on his armour;—or he has arrived at a crisis in his own affairs, or in those of the society with which he is connected ; he has long been pursuing some favourite plans, which are expected speedily to bring important results ; he is on the eve of great events, for evil or for good; he is on a bed of distress, and sees death looking in at the curtains;—and the wish of his heart is, that there were but some means of looking into that dim futurity, of deciding his hesitating judgment, and putting an end to this intensely painful suspense. At such times the mind will catch at every fact or fancy that may seem fitted to relieve its perplexities. Is there no gifted man who sees farther than others into the coming hour which is so portentous ? Are there no appointed connexions by which the future may be seen in the present or the past ? Can no horoscope be constructed by which these mystic movements of the planets may be made to reveal the movements of advancing earthly events ? Will no voice issue from some hallowed grove or shrine ? "Will no whisper of these breezes, no form in these mists or clouds, no vision of supernatural being, be vouchsafed to guide us in these perplexities, or, at least, to put an end to this uncertainty, more excruciating than the most dreadful reality ? From feelings that have been at work in our own breast, we can in some measure understand the intensity of passion which led Brutus to see the vision before the battle of Philippi; which brought Saul, before engaging in his last battle, to the witch of Enclor, to call up his faithful monitor, Samuel; and which induced a king of Israel, who had suffered what seemed to be a fatal injury by a fall, to send messengers to the famous temple at Ekron. Without at all supposing that heaven lends its sanction to such frivolities, we can understand how persons should be led, at times of excited feeling, whether of fear or expectation, to have

recourse to those dreams, mysteries, and casualties, which furnish the materials of all the omens or charms which superstition and knavery employ.

Left without sufficient evidence to support them, we are led, by the whole analogy of the Divine procedure, to reject them. There is far too much of high dignity and solemn majesty in the march of Providence to admit of its stooping down to construct these coincidences of petty ingenuity, worthy only of a mystic, a magician, or a boy poet. While such dim and distant corre-